

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated April 10, 2002, claims 1 and 12 are amended. Claims 1-12 are now active in this application. No new matter has been added.

A drawing correction is proposed for Figs. 1 to change "deta" to "data" and Fig. 21 to label as PRIOR ART . A separate paper requesting approval is submitted concurrently herewith.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112, FIRST PARAGRAPH

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such as way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The Examiner notes that "input manipulation means ... can request the image server to make a registration with a group and can specify one of all the destination group manages sent back from the image server" is recited in claim 1, while the specification describes that input manipulation means, not the image server, for requesting and registration, and the digital multifunction apparatus 120, not input manipulation means, for specifying the destination group.

The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding the Examiner's concern, Applicants believe that the Examiner has a misunderstanding of the present invention. What is recited in claims 1-11 is consistent with the description in the specification from page 9, line 26 to page 10, line 5, and this description corresponds to the summary (the specification, page 3). More specifically, the Examiner assumes that the input manipulation means is provided on the server side and the input manipulation is performed on the server side. However, this is quite different from the present

invention. What claim 1 specifies is that the input manipulation means is provided in each image communication apparatus, which corresponds to the digital multifunction apparatus.

The cited prior art references Hosotubo and Tabata are most likely cited based on such Examiner's assumption.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hosotubo in view of Tabata.

The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner notes that Hosotubo discloses apparatus 22 can request to make a registration with a group. However, the apparatus 22 is a host corresponding to the image server 110 of the present invention, not to the image communication apparatus 120, 130, 140, 160, 310 etc. In Hosotubo, the printer 1 would correspond to the image communication apparatus as understood according to the description at column 6, lines 7-26.

Claims 1 and 11 clearly delineate that the input manipulation means is provided in each communication apparatus and it is the input manipulation means that can request the image server 110 to make a registration with a group. More specifically, the registration request comes, not from the image server (host), but from the individual image communication apparatus connected to the server via network.

In Hosotubo, only the host 22 (corresponding to the server in the present invention) can register a group. Every operation for registration is done by the host, and no commands are issued from the device that is an image communication apparatus. Therefore, the present invention is quite different from Hosotubo.

Tabata is cited based on the above noted Examiner's opinion as to Hosotubo and is not concerned at all with the present application. In Tabata, the group can be listed on a display; however, the displaying can be done on the server side only, and it cannot be done on the side of the digital integrated apparatus like the present invention. Thus, even if the teaching of Tabata were combined with the arrangement of Hosotubo, the claimed invention does not result.

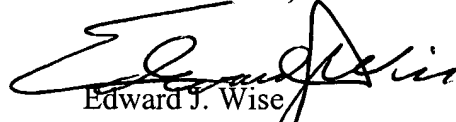
CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is urged that the application, as now amended, is in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS SHOWING CHANGES MADE

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the abstract as follows:

[An image data distribution system and method of distributing image data to a plurality of image communication units connected thereto via network - an image data distribution system and method which can effect changes in distribution destination through simple procedures and materializes shortened transmission time and high-resolution images.

The system according to the present invention based on an image data distribution system wherein groups of destinations are formed of members selected from amount a plurality of image communication apparatuses capable of sending and receiving image, wherein an image server the image server has information on destination group memorized on a storage memory thereon and wherein, when the image server receives a request for distribution of image data together with destination information through a network from one of the image communication apparatuses, - a digital multifunction apparatus, for example - , the image data will be sent out to the respective members of the destination group specified by the destination information. In this image data distribution system, the distribution managing means sends all the distribution destination group names to a digital multifunction apparatus when a request for registration with a group is received from input manipulation means provided in the digital multifunction apparatus and registers the digital multifunction apparatus with a specified distribution destination group when the distribution destination group is specified by the digital multifunction apparatus.]

An image data distribution system wherein an image server has information on destination group formed of members selected from among a plurality of image communication apparatuses. The information is memorized on a storage memory and the image data will be sent out to the respective members of the destination group specified by the destination information. In this image data distribution system, the distribution managing element sends all the distribution destination group names to a digital combination unit when a request for registration with a group is received from input manipulation element provided in the digital combination unit and registers the digital combination unit with a specified distribution destination group when the distribution destination group is specified by the digital combination unit.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1 and 12 as follows

1. (Amended) An image data distribution system wherein [groups of destinations are] an image server has information on destination group formed of members selected from among a plurality of image communication apparatuses, [capable of sending and receiving image, wherein an image server has information on destination groups] and the information are memorized on a storage memory, [thereon] and wherein [when the image server receives a request for distribution of image data together with destination information through a network from one of the image communication apparatuses,] the image data will be sent out to the respective members of the destination group specified by the destination information, said system comprising:

input manipulation means, provided in each image communication apparatus, which can request the image server to make a registration with a group and can specify one of all the destination group names sent back from the image server, and

distribution managing means, provided on the side of the image server, which sends to the image communication apparatus all the distribution destination group names according to the request for group registration from the image communication apparatus and which, when a distribution destination group is specified by the image communication apparatus, registers the image communication apparatus with the specified distribution destination group.

12. (Amended) An image data distribution method wherein [groups of destinations are] an image server has information on destination group formed of members selected from among a plurality of image communication apparatuses, [capable of sending and receiving image, wherein an image server has information on destination groups] and the information are memorized on a storage memory, [thereon] and wherein [when the image server receives a request for distribution of image data together with destination information through a network from one of the image communication apparatuses,] the image data will be sent out to the respective members of the destination group specified by the destination information, said method comprising:

sending all the destination group names to said image communication apparatus when a request for registration with group is made from [the] an input manipulation means provided in the image communication apparatus, and

registering said image communication apparatus with specified distribution destination group when the distribution destination group is specified by said image communication apparatus.